STILL ON DECK

The answer of "Le Pays" to Archbishop Bruchesi's Mandement

MONTREAL
1913

MERCANTILE PRINTING 306 ST. PAUL STREET.

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913

The EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE
COLLECTION *of* CANADIANA

Queen's University at Kingston

STILL ON DECK

"Le Pays" will keep up the fight

M. Godfroy Langlois, M.L.A., for St. Louis division, published the following article, translated from french, in Le "Pays" of the 4th October 1913:

Mgr Bruchesi caused the following mandement to be read in all the churches of his archdiocese on Sunday last:

"PAUL BRUCHESI, by the grace of God and of the Apostolic See, Archbishop of Montreal,

"To the secular and regular clergy, to the religious communities and to all the faithful of our archdiocese. Salutation, peace and blessing in Our Lord.

"Our very dear brethren:—More than a year ago we gave to the editors of Le Pays a solemn warning which you have not forgotten and which terminated in these terms:

"We hope that they will listen to our appeal and that they will change their methods as well as their language. We conjure them in fact to place their pens and their talent to the service of a better cause; that they may remain faithful to our old religious and national traditions; that they respect the Church, its dogmas, its precepts, its discipline, as well as those who are depositaries of its authority. By so doing they will cause us a great joy, whereas if they do otherwise they will force us to discharge towards them, in order to protect the souls of our people, a duty painful, no doubt, but before which our conscience will not hesitate an instant."

"They have, however, continued their deplorable work and consequently oblige us to have recourse to painful measures which we would have wished to avoid. The spiritual welfare of our people is, however, dearer to us than any other consideration. As regards in fact these faithful committed to our juridiction we are in the same position as a father of a family respecting his children. We have, therefore, the strict duty and the undeniable right to put them on guard against any book and any dangerous newspaper, and as the case may require it, to say to them in addressing ourselves to their conscience, "touch it not".

"Considering, therefore, that Le Pays is of nature to gravely injure religious interests and to cause a real harm,especially to the young; in virtue of the power inherent to our episcopal charge and of the power which we hold from the Holy See; having only in view the welfare of religion and the saving of souls, the holy name of God invoked, we formally interdict the reading of this newspaper by all Catholics in our diocese.

"The present mandement will be read in all the churches and public chapels where divine service is held, the first Sunday after its reception.

"Given at Montreal under our sign and seal and the counter sign of our chancellor, the twenty-fifth of September, one thousand nineteen hundred and thirteen.

PAUL, ARCH. DE MONTREAL.

"By order of Monseigneur, AdélardHarbour, Priest Chancellor.

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It is both the right and the duty of Le Pays to protest in the strongest manner possible against the abuse of authority which has just been committed by His Grace Mgr Bruchési.

Why this interdiction?

The archbishop of Montreal declined to give the reasons to the faithful of the diocese over which his jurisdiction extends. The mandement which, in the first plaace, is marked by unaccustomed prudence and discretion diverts itself of the old forms of procedure and simply forbids the reading of our newspaper without precising the slightest motive for so violent an intervention. His Grace insinuates however by an allusion to the warning of last year to the effect that we have failed in our respect for the church, its dogmas, its precepts, its discipline as well as to all those who are constituted the depositary of its authority. We do not hesitate to say that nothing can justify such an insinuation on the part of the archbishop of Montreal.

We will never cease proclaiming the fact that there has never appeared in Le Pays a single line clothed otherwise than in that respect which we owe to the church, to its teachings and to its authority. We have without exception practised an extreme deference towards the religious authority in this country and we say this without reservation and with special sincerity because of the fact that we knew that we were being calumnized in certain ecclesiastical circles. It was, in fact, by our courteous and benevolent attitude that we hoped in vain to disarm those people who had attacked us. We defy Mgr Bruchesi in fact to find a single line in Le Pays, since its foundation, written against the church and its dogmas. Our respect has never been lacking and the same can be said of our orthodoxy. We have, moreover, an excellent certificate from the archbishop himself in which he acknowledges that Le Pays has neither committed heresy nor sinned against public morals and this document will see the light at the opportune moment.

Why this interdiction?

We answer by posing a question. If we had supressed all the articles in Le Pays on what has been designated as St. Jean Baptistism, on the "national sheep," on free and compulsory education, on the uniformity of school books and on Laval University is it to be supposed that our journal would have been interdicted? By no means.

We are compelled therefore to make the admission that the mandement of sunday last inflicts on our race a deep and unmerited humiliation. The French Canadians are as a matter of fact held up to the gaze of the English and protestant population surrounding them as a people who have not yet reached the age of reason, who have not the right to speak and think for themselves on public ques-

tions, who are absolutely incapable of understanding or practising liberty and who have to be driven by the whip or ruler. This state of things has in fact become intolerable and for the past four years we have resisted to the best of our ability this servitude which encompasses our people's will and ambition. We want to see our French Canadian fellow country men, in company with our English speaking compatriots, raised to the dignity of free men and that they may be unassailable in their rights as Canadian citizens. No more servitude in questions of a purely lay character and no more abdication of conscience in the domain of material and moral discussion. Le Pays affirms the right to free discussion, the right to discuss the question of public instruction, or any other matter that may interest us as citizens and as heads of families. This right, Monseigneur, we are determined to vindicate in its integrity and to defend without fear and favor to the bitter end.

Please understand therefore, Your Grace, that our management has decided to call you to account before the tribunals for the damage material and otherwise that may have resulted from your mandement.

Why this interdiction?

It is because we have appealed to French Canadians to act like free men, to develop self respect and the love of effort and labor in order to increase the influence and power of our race and to ensure the liberty of speech and action amongst our people. Can it be however that some one is interested in perpetuating amongst us this passivity and indifference in which our people have been cradled for a half century or more? Is it because we have applied the hot iron to these two sores: the St. Jean Baptism and the Magnanism. The former which has lulled to sleep the province of Quebec to the seducing lullabies and vain clamors of its official orators who for generations past have been telling the credulous and the ignorant that we are the greatest people on the face of earth. The Magnanism which has deadned the brain and made a state religion out of a mere matter of routine and which has refreshened with abundant grace the famine salaries in the province of Quebec.

Why this interdiction?

Is it because we have asked in the most persistent manner for free and compulsory education, the uniformity of school books, the creation of a portfolio of public instruction, complete reforms in our school law which means the carrying out of the full programme of the liberal party.

But, Monseigneur, do you not believe that if there were less illiteracy in the province of Quebec, if our people were better educated the French Canadian race would exercise a more serious and decisive influence in the Canadian Confederation? Therefore Monseigneur, let the reproaches come from the right or the left, from

the north or south, no one will prevent us from continuing an implacable war against the trading in school books, unhealthy school houses, the niggardliness of the school commissions, and in fact every thing of a nature to paralyse the development of public instruction in our midst. We would like to know in fact what superior interest prompts the mobilization of an entire community and the invoking of religion against compulsory education and the uniformity of text books?

This action is certainly not prompted by a desire to be of service to the public?

Why this interdiction?

Is it because we have striven to disassociate our fellow countrymen with the sheep as a national emblem? This poor sheep, the incarnation of passiveness which allows itself to be shorn without a word and which is even dragged to the abattoir without even bleating. This sheep we promenade through the streets on the 24th of June and behind which thousands walk without thinking what they are doing. In fact, if it is not because of this animal which l'Evènement designated as the "national merino" how can we explain the sermon preached some months since by Mgr Bruchesi at St. Jean-Baptist church, and the intempestive language of Rev. Abbé Bélanger at St. Louis de France, on sunday last?

Why this interdiction?

Is it because we ask the University of Laval to do solid work, to form men, and to follow the admirable example of McGill whose activity evokes the admiration of the entire world? Why even the professors of Laval themselves are flying the flag of distress. One of them said to us the other day, that "unless we change our scholastic system, reorganize our whole primary schools, rejuvenate our colleges and unless Laval become a real university, we will be the slaves of the American continent before forty years."

When we compare the magnificent reputation, the splendid prestige and the never ending activity of McGill and Toronto universities with our Laval, one can have very little pride to be satisfied with the dwarfed faculties and stifled edifice of St. Denis street.

Why this interdiction?

Is it because we have advised the young men of our university to aspire to another roll than that of "submissive and obedient sons," to extend the frontiers of their educational vision, to divest themselves of those old prejudices which have caused us so much sorrow in days gone past, and to prepare ourselves for the combats which the future will certainly impose upon us? Is it because we have asked our working classes to rise in revolt against ignorance,

against exploitation, against political inequality and against all the other injustifiable difficulties which bar their progress through life?

But, Monseigneur, if in all discussions on these free questions—free, let it be understood—we have erred or gone beyond the proper limit, the columns of Le Pays have always been open to any one who desired to make a rectification. And moreover the organs at your devotion such as L'Action Sociale, La Croix, La Vérité, and others, were they not always on hand with their implements of combat to reply to our batteries?

And if we have told the truth, if the truths which we have piled up during the past four years are in conformity with the facts and they are — if we have performed our duty without thinking of the ingratitude heaped upon us and of the unpopularity of a task which obliges us to place a ridiculously vain people face to face with its own weakness and its defeats, do you think, Monseigneur, that we will allow our voice to be strangled by such acts of violence as these?

NEVER!

Our national situation at the present time demands grave reflection. The French Canadian race for half a century past is suffering from inertness; it has been palsied in its tongue and in the exercice of its faculties; it has not had the force to follow the groups which surround us in the race for progress and influence and at the present time every one feels that on all hands we are being forced to the wall. In Montreal as well as in every other part of the province of Quebec the infantile mortality render almost useless our fecondity. Yes and it is at this critical period of our national existence, when we feel ourselves weakening and when we hear the cracking of every fibre of our racial organism, that the Legislature of our province solemnly decrees that 33,000 Protestants speaking the French tongue in the province of Quebec do not belong to our nationality and that one cannot be a French Canadian without being a Roman Catholic. Who is it, we ask, that want to isolate us in this Canadian Confederation? When at the present time the directing spirits of the land are demanding a community of aspirations, the collaboration of all men of good will and seeking to bring the different nationalities together in order to create a real and true Canadian spirit, there appears amongst us, yet under cover, a separatist movement. They seek to hive our compatriots so as to prevent them from mixing with the other ethnic groups who are associated with them.

BANDE A PART, that is the word of command and pass word and the dream of certain people who, in fact, wish to make the province of Quebec an immense sheep fold under the banner of the Young Men Catholic Association.

In the meantime, our University languishes, our schools remain in a mediocre condition, our colleges form candidates for the poor

house, our hospitals are without support, our young men are working for the meanest possible salaries while our working classes perspire blood and water, so great is the cost of living.

On the other hand, a few proud, fearless and enterprising English-speaking citizens have created our economic conditions with their banks, their commerce, their manufactures, their railways, their lines of transportation, etc., when, as a matter of fact, they scarcely compose a sixth of our population; yet, without them Quebec would be a dead province.

While this is going on, certain men are unfortunately paying more attention to depriving protestants from membership in the St. Jean Baptist Society and to create national and religious dissensions, than to contribute to the prosperity of the country. Alas! the revocation of the Edict of Nantes has been of little avail to our Canadian Bourbons, both lay and clerical.

It is, in fact, because we have bravely attacked the monstrous amendment to the St. Jean Baptist Society's Charter which isolated 33,000 of our compatriots from its ranks, who are an order-loving element of force and character in the community, that you have interdicted us, Monseigneur. The parish priest of St. Louis de France admitted it. It was not because of dogmas, but because we ridiculed the sheep, because we depreciated the merino. It is because we have asked that the truly national character of St. Jean Baptist Society be conserved and that our brethern of another faith be kept within our ranks.

No one indeed will stop us in our denunciation of this iniquity perpetrated by the eunuchs of the A.C.J.C. in order to successfully foment the worst possible dissensions in our ranks. But Monseigneur, the attitude of your Grace, your clergy and your organs on this question of French Canadian Protestants rhymes singularly with the message of tolerance and love which you sent to "The Star" on the first of January 1911, and which we ask our readers to read and read again in an adjoining column. Here is an extract which under the present circumstances possesses a rare eloquence:

"We must always recognize the fact that there are, and always will be divergence of opinion amongst men. If we recognize this principle and if we attribute to those who do not share our opinions, in political, religious and other questions as much sincerity as we possess ourselves then we will be better citizens and will have more esteem for our neighbors. Because a man differs in opinion with us in politics or religion is no reason why we should denounce him as our enemy for the fact remains he is always our neighbor."

These words of fraternity, of concord and of love were intended however for our English speaking citizens only, whose good graces Mgr Bruchesi has so much at heart. Some one — was it you, Monseigneur — prevented this message from seeing the light in "La Presse", in "La Patrie" and in "Le Devoir" for the reason that no such language must be heard by the French Canadian flock. Tole-

rance, for instance, is a doctrine "de luxe" which must be offered only to our excellent friends of the English tongue, whereas for we, French Canadians, sons of misery and of plebeian estate, there is but one formula, one law and one code and that is, 'believe or die.'

Why does not Mgr Bruchesi accord to French Canadians and Catholics a little of this gracious affection which he extends to men of another tongue and of another faith?

We, for our part, do not admire this two faced tolerance, this indulgencee which hides itself behind words in order that brutal acts may be forgotten.

Mgr Bruchesi says in his mandement that Le "Pays" is of a nature to do grieveous harm to the interests of religion and causes serious evil to the young people of the land. Now we ask when and by what means has this been done?

The young men; you are much afraid to open wide the windows of their souls to more extended horizons and to keep them exclusively in the A.C.J.C. in order to remain master of their intellect and their will, to strangle their thoughts and to castrate their ardor and their vigor.

Monseigneur, you can interdict our paper by invoking imaginary perils, but Le "Pays" will remain in the front rank and in the firing line proudly supported by all the friends of liberty, and rallying from all parts of the country hopeful and healthy energy. These friends, believe us Monseigneur, are recruited in every rank of society from magistrates, business men, professional men, the working classes, who more than others are craving for the breath of liberty, amongst the studious and ambitious young men and in a word amongst all those who think that a man's reason was not given to him for the purpose of mutilation.

We will continue therefore the discussion of all questions of public and national interest. We will continue the advocacy of reforms in the school law in all its plenitude, to pursue the "mouton national," to oppose the proscriptive law in St. Jean Batiste Society, while we will continue to condemn the indolence of Laval, the shortcomings at Quebec and elsewhere and intolerance wherever it shows its head, and all those who love this old province of Quebec, who are proud of their origin and who believe in the moral progress which is due our people, will loudly proclaim that we are in the right.

LE PAYS.

Lesson of tolerance

A message from Archbishop Bruchesi to the "Star", January 1st, 1911

"Going back in my mind during the past month, and indeed during the whole of the past year, and remembering many things which I have heard and read in the newspapers, it seems to me that the best message which I can extend to my fellow citizens is to express the desire that during the year just begun, they should practice charity in the truest and best sense of the word.

We must always recognize the fact that there are, and always will be a divergence of opinion amongst men. If we recognize this principle and if we attribute to those who do not share our opinions in political, religious and other questions, as much sincerity as we possess ourselves, then we will be better citizens and will also have more esteem for our fellowmen.

Because in fact a man differs in opinion from us in politics or religion is no reason why we should denounce him as our enemy for the fact remains that he is our neighbor.

If we are charitable in the best sense of the word, charitable as a nationality, collectively and individually then, in truth, we are conforming to the principles of Chirst who said: "Love one another" and then we will have done our part to bring peace on earth and good will to men.

PAUL, Archbishop of Montreal.

COMPARE

(Mandement against Le Pays in 1913.)

"We forbid until further orders, under pain of refusal of the sacrements, all the faithful to print, to deliver to agencies or to keep on sale, to sell, to distribute, to read or to receive, to keep in possession these two dangerous and unhealthy sheets or to collaborate or to encourage them in any manner whatever."

(Mandement against Le Pays in 1913.)

"Invoking the Holy Name of God we formally forbid the reading of this newspaper by all the Catholics of our diocese."

Le "Pays"

A progressive paper fighting for reform and better education in the province of Quebec.

A strong medium to reach the best class of the french population

The most popular of the six saturday night papers in Montreal.

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